Ottawa: Theatres -1-

There were alot of movie theatres in Ottawa in the pre TV days. Starting on Bank street south first) was the STRAND theatre about 8 blocks further south of the May fair theatre.
This doesnt help, if you dont know where the Maytair theatre is/was. The Maytair was at just before the bridge over the Canal. from Landsdowne Park there were no theatres until Second Avenue on the north west corner and as I have mentioned this was the Avalon or later the Glebe theatre. The next was the Rialto at (the kids called it the rathole because it and the strand were not fancy theatres). Then came the Imperial theatre and the Regent with the Centre of Nelson Queen and the on Rideau & Nelson. The Capital Theatre

the city. It was built in the grand theatre style with winding marble staircase to the second floor marble & artwork throughout, velvet curtains and a stage. It was used for concerts and stage performances before the National Arts Centre was built. Why it was torn down, ____ knows. A real show piece.

Most of the theatres had stages in front. As I mentioned the Avalon or Globe used their stage "Saturday morning" for a "kids club" - games, contests, clowns before the cartoons and the serial. (The serial was intended to bring you back because at the end of each episode the hero would be falling, riding, crashing etc to their certain death. Next week you would find they had been miraculously saved). Stages came

TV quickly put an end to the faithful movie goers. "Syracuse had the first "local" TV station and our rich friends on Clemow or Powell had TVs and long radio mast aerials to pick up a fuzzy picture. Amazing. Up to then it was movies on Saturday, radio on Sunday and the Amos & Andic, Cisco Kid etc radio programs week nights.

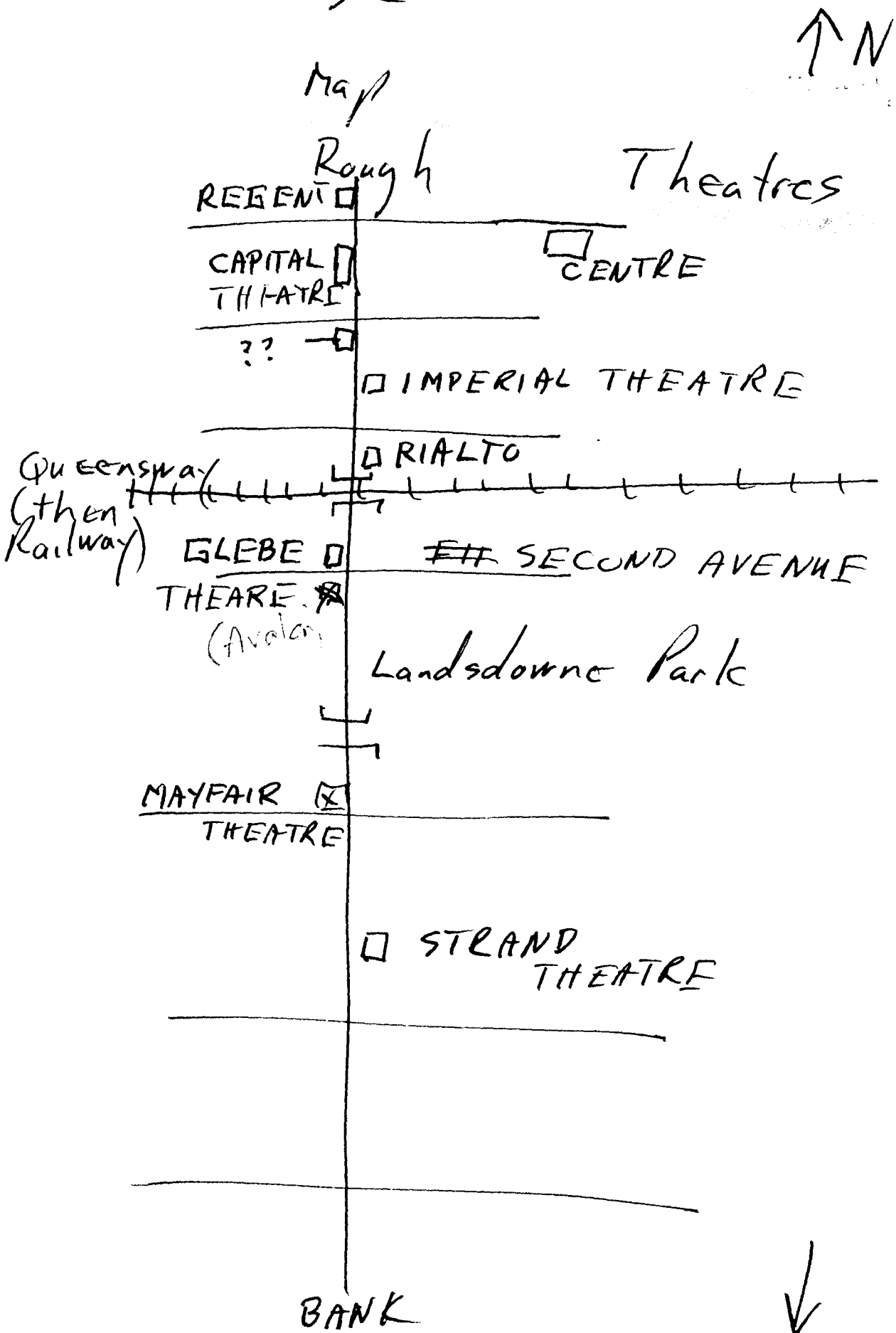
The stage at the Glebe theatre was used to combat TV - but didnt work. The Glebe brought in "believe it or not" real live entertainers - no names but still not bad troupers to supplement between movies.

One was a clown, alot of humorists, magicians These were not for the kids but during regular Saturday movies to attract the adults. The adults

new TV sets watching "Ed" Sullivan and "I Love Lucy".

One interesting sidelight to this brief Vaudeville episode or period of the Globe theatre. One of the many entertainers the theatre management brought in was an imitator. He could imitate anyone and this really impressed us boys. We went around imitating James Cagney, Jimmy Stewart John Wayne for weeks.

One of my friend Geoffrey Scott (who became an MP and a journalist) was particularly good at it. He and a friend had a competition who would be the best at imitating people. The friend of Geof won out. The friends name was Rich Little.

Map

Rough Theatres